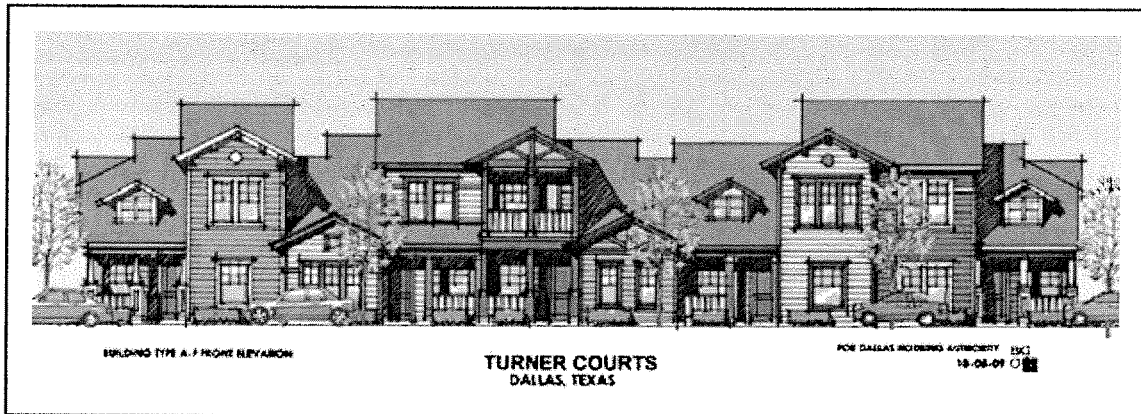


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HUD Delivers \$22 Million to Dallas Housing Authority For Beleagured Turner Courts

By Robert Wilonsky

published: Tue., Jun. 1 2010 @ 12:46 PM



Turner Courts, Dallas Housing Authority's 58-year-old public housing project on Bexar Street, has long been on the city's to-do list. Just a few months ago, the city council's Housing Committee took yet another long, hard look at Turner Courts in the hopes of using 2006 Proposition 8 Bond money just to prop it up. Per the briefing, though, that money wasn't gonna cut it -- not by the longest of long shots.

As in: "Turner Courts is 'severely distressed' and requires total demolition and reconstruction. And: It suffers from "elevated rates of vandalism and criminal activity." And: "Original design and the age of the structures rendered the long standing 'band aid' repair approach to be futile." For months, the city's been waiting for big help -- as in, big-money help from the feds. It applied for a HOPE VI Revitalization Program grant and hoped for the best.

And, indeed, today it got the good news: The AP directs our attention to U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan's announcement moments ago that the Dallas Housing Authority will indeed "receive \$22,000,000 to revitalize the Turner Courts public housing development." Turner Courts was among six projects awarded HUD money today. Forty-four applied, and the feds says they went with projects that had "redevelopment effort[s] with early childhood education programs." I've tried reaching DHA officials, including newly installed chief executive officer Mary Ann Russ, but that may be the worst voice-mail system in the history of phone calls.

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Lets hope DHA doesn't screw this up like their fiasco in North Oak Cliff where they tried to secretly move 100 mentally ill homeless people to a DHA building next to an elementary school. MaryAnn Russ' arrogance has

